



A Soldier's Letters to Charming Nellie

J.B. Polley

A Soldier's Letters to Charming Nellie

Joseph Benjamin Polley (1840 - 1918)

“Whether written in camp, in hospital, or in hospitable home, the letters tell a plain, unvarnished, and true story of the observations and experiences, the impressions and feelings, of a soldier whose only personal regret is that he could not be one of those whose paroles at Appomattox are patents incontestable that they fought for the right as they saw it, as long as there was a hope to encourage them. . . . they are historical in the respect that they narrate actual occurrences in camp, on the march, and in the battle. The lady to whom all but the last were addressed was no more a myth from 1861 to 1865 than now, when, a gray-haired wife, mother, and grandmother, she presides . . . over the home made for her by the gallant officer of the Tennessee Army, her first and only beloved, whom she wedded shortly after the close of the war. It was not until March of 1865 that they ever met. Her letters kept him so well-advised of all that was transpiring in Texas, and were so friendly, entertaining, and altogether "charming," that, without leave or license, he substituted that adjective for the conventional "Miss" to which she was entitled. *(the author)*

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Girl Reading a Letter (detail)



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